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AUTHOR Ishler, Peggy
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ABSTRACT

The drawbacks of the common practice of using check-lists for teacher evaluation include inadequate measurement that emphasizes evaluation only, lack of objective data gathering techniques, and lack of reliable and consistent teacher performance criteria. An inservice program for school principals was designed to improve their observation and evaluation skills and help them to become more effective educational leaders. The program was based on findings from effective teaching research studies which provided teacher performance criteria for the principals during their regularly scheduled observation periods in the classrooms. The intensive inservice program included: (1) information on effective schools and effective teaching practices; (2) information on effective evaluation practices, including goal setting techniques, conferencing, observation techniques, and report writing techniques; (3) information on faculty development resources; (4) observation and demonstration by an evaluation consultant model expert; (5) practice with feedback on the use of these skills on the job; and (6) practice with coaching each other as principals, assistants, and department heads worked together with the techniques during the year. (JD)

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Upgrading Education Means Upgrading the Teacher Evaluation System: Merging Evaluation Information and Effective Teaching Research--An Inservice Approach

Peggy Ishler
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio

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The Principal's Problem

Principal Jones is preparing an evaluation report on his observation with Mrs. Thomas, a ten-year veteran in the school. He has just given her a 4 for clarity of presentation and now is deciding between a 3 or 4 on classroom management. He feels uncomfortable checking numbers on a rating scale. Last year she received a 5 on the rating. How would she react to a 3 or 4 rating this year? He decides on a 4 for the management category then sits back in his chair. He notices that his hands are clammy.

Evaluation by a check list has been practiced all over the country for years. Its shortcomings have been reviewed at length in the literature. The drawbacks include such negative factors as inadequate measurement that emphasizes evaluation only, lack of objective data gathering techniques, lack of reliable and consistent teacher performance criteria, to name only a few. Little wonder that Principal Jones felt uncomfortable. He is caught in the awkward position of having to implement an evaluation system whose major purpose is to make judgments about the effectiveness of teachers through comparing them on their abilities to meet designated characteristics. Such a model for teacher evaluation is called a common law model by McGreal (1983) in his book, Successful Teacher Evaluation. This model is cited as existing in 65 percent of the school districts

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in the country. Principal Jones' troubles have just started with this model. His district is considering implementing a merit pay plan. He recognizes that this check list evaluation system may serve administrator purposes but does nothing to improve instruction and does little to distinguish effective teaching. It does not examine teachers' impact on their students. It does not encourage professional development.

Principal Jones is not alone in his concern about effective evaluation. Through the recommendations in many of the national reports concerning implementation of career ladders and/or merit pay reward system for teachers, much attention is being focused on this area of teacher evaluation. The National Commission on Excellence in Education Report (1983) charged that salary, promotion, tenure and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that can reward superior teachers, encourage average teachers, and improve or terminate weak teachers. Action for Excellence (1983) issued a similar directive for schools to put in place, as soon as possible, systems for fairly and objectively measuring the effectiveness of teachers and rewarding outstanding performance. Responsibilities for implementing such systems after they are developed will rest largely on the Principal Joneses in American's schools. Therefore, a critical place for improvement to start is with the teacher evaluation system and with the implementor of that system--the principal.

The importance of the principal as a key figure in producing successful schools is being widely recognized through the findings of effective school research. Principals are identified as playing an important role in establishing school climate and providing leadership

for academic success. (Austin 1979) In effective school studies, principals are found to promote high standards among both faculty and students. (Wellish 1978) Therefore, the place to begin to upgrade achievement standards and instruction is with these administrators in the role of evaluators.

Training the Principal

This article's main objective is to describe an in-service program designed to improve principals' observation and evaluation skills for the purposes of working within more sophisticated models of evaluation. The article also explains a behavioristic model of teacher evaluation that includes goal setting, clinical supervision techniques with pre- and post-conferencing, use of objective data gathering techniques, and narrative observation reporting.

The in-service plan is presented here to provide ideas for improving principals' evaluation skills and to explain another approach to evaluation other than the common law approach. The message of the article is that it is essential to train principals in evaluation techniques in order for them to be effective leaders and meet the challenges issued in the national reports.

Behavioristic Evaluation Model Explained

Principals in two school districts in Northwest Ohio recognized the need to improve their evaluation skills in order to be able to implement new evaluation systems that included the above listed components of goal setting, clinical supervision, use of objective data gathering techniques, and a narrative report. One of the new behavioristic systems included an information base from effective schools research to help suggest possible goals for the goal setting

component and to provide indicators of effective teaching in the observation component. These characteristics of effective schools and teaching are the new data addition to teacher evaluation (McGreal 1983) that is giving it more credibility by providing a focus for describing effective teacher characteristics developed from the research. It is the principal as an interpreter and implementor of the research who can lead the way to upgrading instruction through the evaluation process. Consequently, the administrative staffs recognized that they needed more skills and knowledge in order to successfully use the new evaluation system.

The behavioristic evaluation model was developed in one system over a year-and-a-half timeline in which committees of faculty and administrators listed district goals and a profile of the effective teacher for the district. During this period of goal setting, faculty and administrators were brought up-to-date on effective teaching research. Goal setting involved principals and teachers developing building goals and teachers developing classroom and individual goals. These goals were to be reviewed by principals when they were observing teachers to note the progress being made in achieving the goals.

The evaluation process starts at the beginning of the school year with teachers being visited in a clinical supervision model plan that includes (1) pre conferencing with review of goals and problems, (2) classroom observation, (3) analysis and strategies, (4) post-observation conference and (5) post-system analysis. (Anderson and Krajewski 1980) All teachers are to be observed formally once a year, with informal visits scattered throughout the year. A formal visit necessitates the use of the clinical supervision steps and an observation

report. New teachers are to be formally observed three times a year. The evaluation form used in these visits will be a blank sheet of paper that later will contain the observation report written in narrative form. The observation techniques to be used are to write what is happening in the room and gather objective data using simple observation instruments. The principal, after analyzing the data, will be expected to provide remediation suggestions and follow-up for those teachers appearing deficient in effective teaching techniques.

Teachers in this evaluation process are encouraged to practice self-evaluation throughout the year by means of student feedback instruments, peer observations, and audio and video taping of classes.

One district provides evaluation packets containing samples of feedback forms for students and video tape analysis sheets. This packet is thick with materials on effective teaching, district goals, and goal setting suggestions.

Inservice Model

The in-service activities involved in training administrators and teachers for this evaluation system were in three phases: (1) first phase alerted principals to the skills they would need to implement the procedure, along with effective teaching information; (2) the second phase introduced the entire faculty to the new evaluation procedure and effective teaching information; and (3) the third phase provided an individual in-service day for each administrator with an expert in teacher evaluation who observed the principal in the observation cycle and gave feedback.

First Phase--Summer Workshop

The first phase activities consisted of a day-long workshop held in the summer in which principals concentrated on improving their evaluation skills. They had expressed some misgivings about observing a classroom without a form in hand to check-off characteristics. They realized that implementing the new evaluation system was going to require more of their time and knowledge. A few were defensive about giving up their traditional method of "Telling it like it is" with judgmental statements. Also the assumption that teacher evaluation is useful only as an administrative tool for examining the retention of new teachers was evident. "My teachers have all been with me for over eight years," one principal remarked. "The evaluation process is routine for them. What more can I say that I haven't already said?"

Changing attitudes toward evaluation and expanding principals' views to include the staff development aspect were an essential task of the inservice, as was helping principals to see that the information collected about teachers can be shared with them for the purpose of analyzing their progress toward accomplishing their professional goals. This approach added a new dimension to their roles that they had not had time to consider before. At this point in the workshop the effective teaching research was introduced to update their knowledge about effective schools and classrooms.

The inclusion of the research on teaching made a powerful contribution to this initial in-service workshop because it offered a basis from which to make judgments about teacher behavior after principals analyzed the objective data gathered. Special consideration was given to gathering time-on-task information and examining the respective

research. Also the principals were given handouts on characteristics of effective teachers and principals' practice as presented in the Squires, Huitt, and Segars, Effective Schools and Classrooms: A Research-Based Perspective (1983). Guided practice was provided by showing video tapes of classes from which the principals practiced collecting observational data. Discussion of teaching effectiveness research was worked in as it pertained to behaviors of teachers noted on the tapes.

The following supervision and evaluation skills were discussed and practiced:

1. conferencing skills - pre and post
2. observations techniques--gathering objective data
3. effective teaching skills--noticing use of time-on-task; effective feedback; effective climate for success; appropriate coverage
4. report writing skills--synthesizing observation data, writing a narrative report
5. referral skills--acting as a resource for professional development with books on effective teaching research; self-evaluation procedures such as video-taping one's class for analysis; student feedback procedures

This initial session was packed with information as well as practice exercises and required a full day in order to assure enough time for discussion and adequate practice experiences.

Second Phase--School Orientation

The next step in the in-service phase of establishing a new evaluation project was to introduce the entire faculty to the new evaluation procedures and effective teaching information. The new evaluation procedure was explained by the principals in each building and the teachers were taken through the evaluation steps via viewing a

teacher's classroom on video tape. The teachers were encouraged to gather data about the video teacher and her effects on the students as they viewed the tape. Then the principal and the consultant shared their data they had compiled on the teacher, projected on an overhead the report written on that evaluation, and discussed the post-evaluation conference with the teachers.

At another in-service meeting the teachers were introduced to research on effective teaching and were encouraged to practice observing effective teaching techniques by watching another video tape of an actual classroom situation.

Third Phase--Individual In-Service

The third phase of the evaluation in-service plan was the individual in-service day in which each administrator had the attention of the evaluation consultant for feedback and suggestions as the principal moved through the evaluation procedure. The consultant provided feedback to the administrators on their effectiveness with pre- and post-conferences, observations skills, and report writing, along with recommendations for further study and improvement. The consultant would sit in on the pre- and post-conferences and critique the procedure and results following the actual conferences. Also the consultant would visit a classroom with the principal, perform an observation then check observation techniques and data gathering with the principal's observation efforts. Following the observation, the consultant would compose an evaluation report using the narrative open form and return in a few days to compare the report to the one written by the principal. In addition, previously written reports were critiqued by the consultant for such features as appropriate format and elimination of judgmental statements unless supported by observed data.

This on-the-job observation and feedback proved to be a valuable in-service experience for improving the principals' skills. All but one of the participating principals remarked in an evaluation of the total in-service program that having immediate feedback on their observation techniques and writing of the report was very helpful.

The teachers responded favorably to the situation of the principals' being observed while evaluating the teachers. As was mentioned by one teacher, the participation of the principals in such a closely scrutinized experience indicated that the principals were seriously trying to improve their skills.

Suggestions for Observation Data Gathering

Suggestions given to principals to facilitate their data gathered during the observations included some of the following:

1. Write everything that happens but write descriptively rather than judgmentally.

2. Identify through the pre-conference the focus of the observation--could focus on teacher goals, noted problems, effective teaching characteristics, etc.

3. Divide the observation paper into teacher/student columns for recording what is said then classroom interaction can be coded and decoded more easily.

4. Use seating charts to gather information in abbreviated forms such as:
   a. tally each student who answers a question.
   b. tally each student who is called on.
   c. mark each student each time he/she is off task.
   d. draw teacher movement pattern around the room.

5. Develop own set of abbreviations to code interaction. Using the 10 category numbers from Flanders Interaction Analysis can serve as effective shorthand.

6. Use characteristics of effective classroom to help focus data gathering. Information can be recorded under four headings or sorted under these headings for report writing--planning, instruction, management, and climate.

7. Look for evidence of effective teaching techniques under each of the four major headings by examining and collecting data during the lessons and in the lesson plans on the following descriptors:

Observation Data to Record on Effective Teaching Practices

Planning

Objectives stated
Concepts identified
Lesson sequence detailed
Variety of instructional techniques listed
Variety of materials listed
Evaluation of objectives identified

Management

Beginning of class recorded
Ending of class recorded
Amount of teacher off-task time recorded
Amount of student off-task time recorded
Fluid transition between activities described
Focus on lesson described
Handling of off-task problems described
Examples of structure and organizations described

Instruction

Actual learning time recorded
Levels of questions noted
Examples of clarity of presentation described
Examples of relevance to instructional goals observed
Amount of student participation recorded
Number of students working at appropriate level of material recorded
Amount of test related to content taught
Amount and kind of reinforcement recorded
Motivation techniques listed
Performance standards stated
Guided practice and individual practice use cited

Climate

Teacher expectation for student success described
Signs of student success recorded
Student attitudes noted
Teacher attitudes noted
Sound levels described
Availability of materials described
Academic orientation described
Examples of support and concern for individual shown by teacher
Examples of teacher in-charge behavior
Amount and quality of time teacher spends with students
Seat arrangement described

Suggestions for Writing the Evaluation Report

Suggestions for writing the observation and/or evaluation report included the following:

1. Organize report around several main topics coming from teacher objectives, principal concerns, or effective teaching characteristics.

2. Make no judgmental statements without supporting them with objective or descriptive data. (For example, changing the statement, "You spent too much time with the student," to "You worked with Johnny for eight minutes out of the 30-minute practice period. During this time five hands were up in the air signaling questions."

3. Summarize observation points and recommendations at end of report. Such a summary is helpful for professional development purposes. This list can include mention of positive practices to continue using.

Suggestion for Post-Conference Session

Suggestions for the post-conference session encouraged principals to focus on professional development with experienced tenured teachers by:

1. reviewing the progress made toward teacher's goals and establishing together additional goals to work towards.

2. suggesting some professional development procedures to use as follow-up such as video taping, audio tapes, student feedback instrument, peer observations, parent feedback instruments.

Principals' Reaction to Evaluative Changes

After working with the principals during the first round of observations in the fall, one could note a sense of commitment forming, encouraged by the positive response of the teachers. Principals remarked that the new process focused much more heavily on professional development, created a more positive image of the administrators as concerned educators with the capabilities to observe and analyze the

instructional process. Every post-conference, with only one exception, ended with teachers remarking that they liked this process better because they could learn more about their teaching through the data gathered. Teachers made surprised comments like: "You certainly collected a lot of information about that one class," or "I never realized that I was ignoring that row."

The principals acknowledged that the new evaluation process was creating changes in their administration function. They have been spending more time in their supervisory educator role with more frequent informal classroom visits, spending more time on analyzing and writing up data from the observations and in pre- and post-conferencing. They are upgrading their knowledge on the act of teaching by reading the effective schools literature, Madeline Hunter materials, recent ASCD publications including Squires et al., Effective Schools Research (1983) and Thomas McGreal's Effective Methods of Evaluation (1983). One principal has started featuring an item from effective schools research or learning principles each week in the school newspaper for teacher discussion and reaction. A high school principal is turning an administrative workroom into a conferencing and research room with posted test scores on walls from basic skills tests of the students. He also displays building goals, profiles of effective teaching techniques, and professional literature on research in instruction and effective practice.

The principals have sensed a new responsibility to professional development in their roles as educational leaders. They have recognized that together with their teachers' cooperation they can improve teaching through the encouragement of those behaviors in both teachers

and students that are associated in the research with promoting achievement in basic skills area. They have expressed excitement about the possibility of fostering success.

Results from a post in-service evaluation check revealed the following effects of the in-service: all principals indicated in their evaluations that they now see their roles as an educational leader enhanced by their ability to handle a more objective, clinical approach to evaluation and supervision. They are reinforced through the positive comments they have received from teachers on their ability to analyze classroom interactions. All responded that they are emphasizing certain effective teaching techniques from the research literature which they had not considered observing before. All with the exception of two saw more opportunities for increasing professional development through a goal-focused approach to observation and a concentration on practice verified by the research. The main concern with the evaluation process itself was that it took much time from the principals' schedules. Having to reorganize job priorities became a must.

"When Superintendent Emerson doesn't get my facilities report on time, he will have to understand that I am doing something more important," remarked one principal at an in-service meeting. Superintendent Emerson, participating in the meeting, smiled, and nodded acknowledging the district's commitment to more an effective evaluation process.

The need for feedback and support with the techniques remained after the consultant withdrew from the program; consequently, the principals formed their own support teams to coach one another, share

ideas for data gathering and report writing, find ways to reduce time involved in the process. They planned a session for critiquing of each other's reports and also for sharing their efforts in promoting effective teaching practice. This exchange of ideas and feedback has continued to be an important feature in the development of their evaluation skills. Those principals not involved in such a support system regarded their skills as questionable when asked to react on the in-service evaluation form. This aspect of skill development--the refinement of skills--requires considerable coaching and feedback which can be obtained successfully from each other, as was pointed out by Joyce and Showers (1983).

Summary

In summary, the procedure described here outlined a three phase evaluation in-service that can be used to implement a more effective evaluation program. Such effective evaluation programs require principals to have good skills in teacher evaluation practices.

In order for principals to acquire these skills, they need to go through intensive in-service that includes:

- information on effective schools and effective teaching practices.
- information on effective evaluation practices including goal setting techniques, conferencing, observation techniques, and report writing techniques.
- information on faculty development resources.
- observation and demonstration by an evaluation consultant model expert.
- practice with feedback on the use of these skills on the job.
- coaching each other as principals, assistants, and department heads work together with the techniques during the year.

Through such intensive in-service efforts principals will be better equipped to meet the demands of changing evaluation systems to include merit pay and career ladders plans. More importantly, with these skills, principals can become the instructional leaders effective administrators should be.

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